A Short

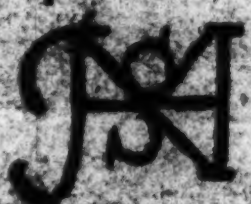
ESSAY OF AFFLICTIONS.

OR,

Balme to Comfort if not Cure those that Sinke or Languish under present misfortunes,

and are not prepared in these unsetled times to meet all events, with constant and equall tempers.

Written from one of His Majesties Garrisons, as a private advise to his onely Sonne, and by him Printed to satisfie the importunity of some particular friends.



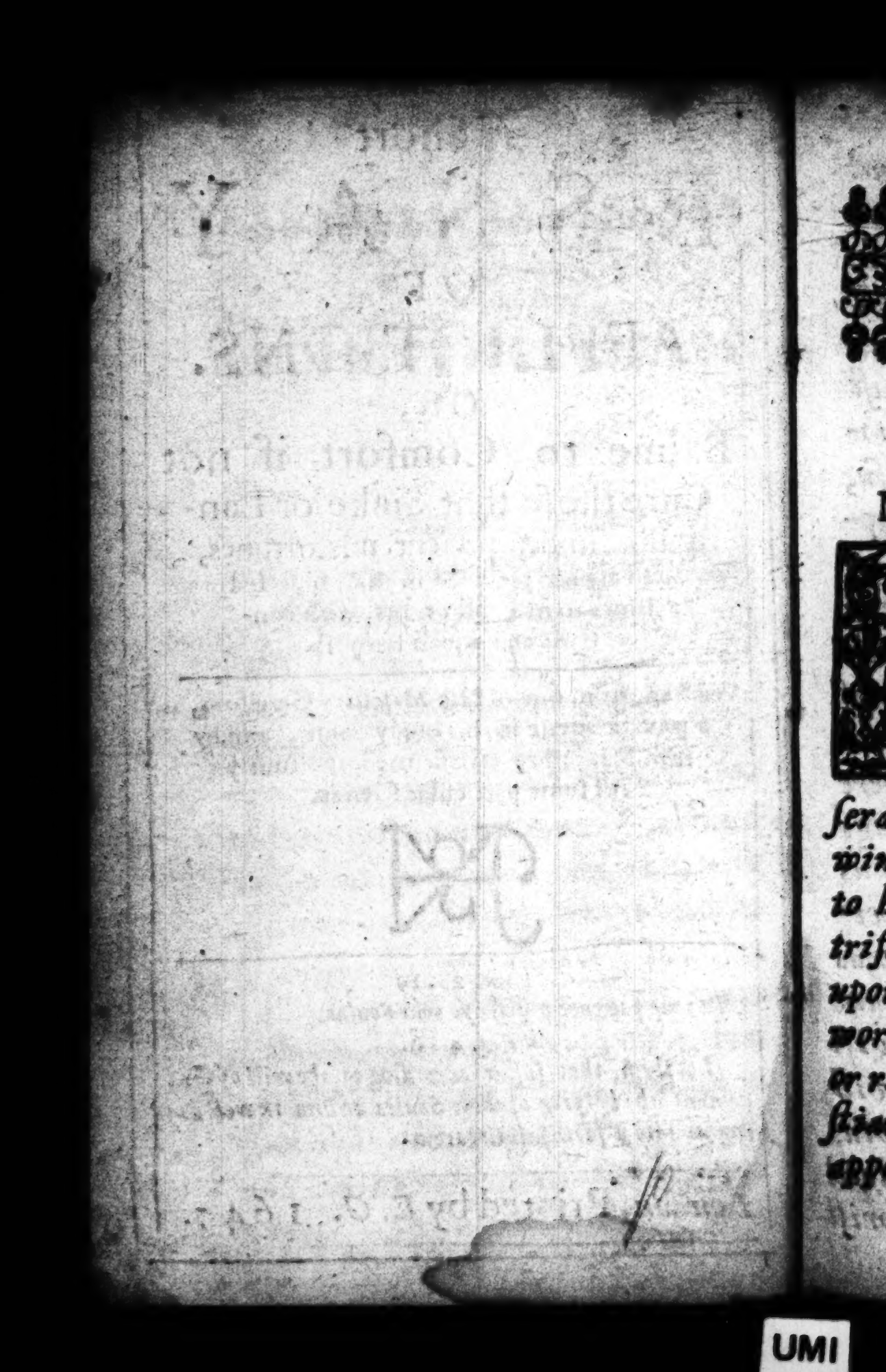
Luke 21.19

In your patience possesse ye your Soules.

1 Pet. 4.19.

Let them that suffer according to the will of God commit the keeping of their Soules to him in well doing, as unto a faithfull Creatour.

London, Printed by E. G. 1647.



My deereſt Sonne,

Ince I know that man is only truly happy, that the want of outward things cannot make miſerable, I cannot but adviſe you to winde up and raiſe your thoughts to higher objects then ſublunary triſles; And when you doe looke upon the low tranſitories of this world, let it be through the wrong, or rather Right end of the Chriſtians Perſpective, that they may appeare but little, if any thing, in

your eyes, which are ſo weake and empty of all true comfort in themſelves, that as Saint Ambroſe upon the devils vaniſhing proſpect Matthew 4. ſaith, he ſhewed all in a moment to our Saviour, leaſt looking a little he had ſeene nothing; neither doth our Jeſu, who knew beſt the way to happineſſe in that he was the way, ſet any other eſtimate upon them: for when he commands us to ſeeke a Kingdome, it is of heaven, not earth, omitting the very naming of any thing here below, as of no value, all things temporall being with him but as duſt upon the ballance, or overwaights caſt onely into the ſcale, as appendices of grace, and ſo meane as not worthy the name of a gift from him. And this the devill knew ſo well, that in his temptations of power, he acknowledged Chriſt

Christ to be the Sonne of God. But, as Aquinas *observes, in that of weaknesse, wherein he bated his lure onely with the perishing nothings (the shadowes, and semblances of glory) the sole Monarchy of the world, he considered him onely as a man, and durst not once call him the Sonne of God, knowing it might prevaile with frayltie, not Infinitie. From whence let me ingage you to fortifie your selfe against such allurements. And though you are likely by Gods mercy yet to possesse a competent measure of earthly comforts (notwithstanding the straites and difficulties I have passed) let not them possesse you, but be in the world, not of it. And though some part of the affections will touch upon it, while you are here, let it be but like a wheele, in Puncto, in the least point, and that not fixt,*

but moving, considering all below are but perishing vanities, good onely (when vertue animates, and sends them abroad) in their using, not injoying, when you must be taken from them, if not they from you; and the longest terme of having them is but for life; which ever diminisheth by increasing, and is at most but a bubble, a smoake, or ayery being, the onely difference, as one saith, betweene sleep, and death that soone comes to nothing. Yet this short spanne or thread of life is most commonly ravelled out, in trouble to get, care to keepe, and feare to loose these unsatisfying comforts, which at no time are permanent, but now, as it were dying at the very root, when such an Inundation of misery is broken in upon us, as hath almost brought all things to another Chaos; so that

that nothing but an Almighty power can bring light out of our darkneſſe; forme, beauty, and order out of ſuch a heape, and maſſe of confuſion. Nay, ſuch is the violent tide, and impetuouſneſſe of ſome mens paſſions, as they would doe more then Noahs *flood, in making but one common grave for State, Church, and all, though God hath in his goodneſſe yet bounded them, in ſaying,* Hitherto you ſhall goe, and no further; *and will ſtill give us ſafety, ſalvation in the Arke, (the true and Ancient Proteſtant faith, & Reverentiall worſhip as it was reformed, and practiſed in Queene* Elizabeths *dayes) riſe, and rage thoſe waters never ſo much; for God being Pilot, will ſteere, and keep it floating upon thoſe devouring waves, till he finde it another Ararat to reſt on;*

yet that you may guide your course with the more comfort, and safety in this troubled Ocean, I shall like a lanterne in the haven, or so many Sea-markes for direction commend unto you these few practicall considerations following; which truly like the ballast of the ship, have kept me in an even and safe course, in the midst of our greatest stormes, and made me by Gods infinite goodnesse happy in misery, rich in want, and contented in all conditions: nor will they prove unprofitable to you, if you looke up to God for a blessing, when you reflect upon them in your meditations, but will make you in habit, and affections above misfortunes, if not a Martyr, (when called to it upon Christian, and noble termes) and in Calmes tackle, and tite your weake built Pinnace to endure all weathers upon

on any change. And I feare, though our present clouds (the immediate messengers of tempests) doe something scatter, they may gather again into a higher malignity then ever, since I see they are still bigge with those foggy and fiery exhalations, out of which the Thunder-bolts of Gods wrath were lately formed, and made; and I feare our new sinnes will againe midwife, and bring them forth to wrack us in the very haven, if wee allay not the storme by a shower of repentant teares, and by our more faithfull sincere, and constant returnes to God, turne his wrath from us (which he of his mercy grant, if it be his blessed will,) and how ever inable you, (and all his) to undergoe with an equall temper, and holy submission, what his wisedome hath appointed for us.

Onely

Onely I shall desire you to use these short Essayes piously, (the Subject whereof is chiefly the Christians comportment in afflictions) as a meanes to fix your Quick-silver, and unconstant temper: And I shall not doubt but God of his mercy will water this my planting which the heavenly dew of his grace, and make it bring forth comfort here with joy in the holy Ghost; and (with the Phenix) Glory in your Resurrection, which is the Prayer of

Your affectionate Father.

Aprill the 20.
An. Do. 1646.

AN

AN ESSAY OF AFFLICTIONS, AND The Christian's comportment in them.

IF the whole life of Christ was a continued crucifixion, in that he was borne a Martyr, found a Golgatha in *Bethlem*, and made his birth, and his death, his Christmas,

Chriſtmas, and good Friday, both Morn, and Evening of one and the ſame day of ſuffering; we that fight under the Banner of his Croſſe, muſt not thinke to follow our Generall in his triumphs, if we leave him in the field, or carry no markes of Honour (Prints of his wounds) about us, which how mortall ſoever, never prove deadly; But as *Romanus* ſaid, when *Aſclebiades* made his tormentors cut and crucifie him, (*Tot ecce laudant ora, quot ſunt vulnera*) muſt prove ſo many mouthes to praiſe, and glorifie God with: and not with *Ionas* be angry though he ſtrike our Gourd, take all worldly comforts from us, and exchange them for many poſitive evils, eſpecially ſince a heathen *Anaxarchus*, when

when *Nicoreon* a Tyrant would have brayed him in a morter could say, (his cause being good,) *Thou canst but beat the Bag, the Sachell, not the man.* Nay such hath beene the constancy, and courage of Heathens, as *Julius Cæsar* said when in expectation of Shipwrack, *the man may perish, his fortitude cannot.* And therefore let us Christians much more contend with the Ax, grow by cutting, and with Cummin, live by dying; for if they be more then men, shall not we be more then they? and with the ball, *percussa surgo*, since with *Plutarch* in the Fable betweene the Sun and the winde, the roughnesse of the tempest made the travellor wrap his cloake about him (keepe what he had) the faster, when the

silent

ſilent Rhetoricke of the ſuns beames overcame him, and made him diveſt himſelfe. Nay, if man that was God, was obſcured, over-ſhadowed, and in ſo inglorious an eſtate as to ſuffer all the degrees, and dimenſions of Shame, Paine, and Death for us; ſhall not we, wormes, and no men, ſuffer our ſelves to be trampled on for him? and think it no ſhame, but our ſecurity to retire into the Caverns (our moſt abject, and ſecluſe beings) againſt the malice of our Perſecutors, when they ſhall ſo invade us, as not to allow us a viſible one; Eſpecially ſince God will be there both our Priſon, Keeper, hiding place, and Preſerver, whether we conſider the Church Dilated, or contracted into one man:

Pſal. 32.7.

ſo

so that, though our life be a warfare, and the weake built Pinnaces of our bodies are no sooner lanced out of their ports (our Mothers wombes) into the Ocean of this world, but they are torn, and tossed by the severall warring billowes of various accidents, If a heavenly winde fill our sayles (the spirit of God breath gently in our Prayers) and that our maine mast hold out a white Flag of Innocency inlayed with the red crosse of Christs blood, conscience being our Pilot, the Scriptures our compasse, his Promises our Anchor, and our Pole-star Christ, in Shipwrack we shall have a Planke, in the sea a Whale to preserve us, and waft us into a more safe, if not so calme a harbour, as we aymed Job.7.1.

aymed at. For though God ſubmits his Children to be ſubject to, and ſenſible of troubles, as the common condition of man, he will then preſerve them from the venome, though not the ſting of thoſe vipers; and if toſſed with ſtormes, will put a ſtrong Ship under them, and make the lowdeſt thunder, but as a lofty voyce, or lowd Muſicke to uſher in their triumph, and Coronation; And if he ſuffer them to be troden into the earth with ſcornes, and contempts, it is but (as Seed is buryed to make it multiply the more) that they might riſe the more glorious, which ſhould encourage us to endeavour to make all events equall to us, knowing that like the beſt ſteele we may (by the grace of God)

God) fashion them either into a sheild or sword to our selves Prosperity and Adversity being but the matter, the stamp or forme ours to give, either the Lions fiercenesse, and destructive nature, or the Lambs Innocence. For the most rough, and hard afflictions are in themselves, as all things of indifferencie, neither Good, nor Bad, but in order to their last end; So as Crosses (as they are Corrections for, and not simply Punishments of our sinnes) may become mercies, and blessings unto us, and are a part of divine providence both in respect of their Author, Order and End, when it is his wisdome to advance our happinesse by sufferings, that no Person of the meanest condition might misse of a meanes to

Amos 3. Es. 45. Lam. 3. Heb. 12.

felicity. And so to be not onely patiently and cheerfully
Luk.6.28 submitted to, but rejoyced in. If we suffer for righteousnesse
Jam.1.2. sake, * and look to God as the Creator, and Conductor of
1 Peter 2. them. * For when we see the Puppits move (the men of this world bite, and wound us) we must consider an invisible hand moving the wiers, ordering the Events for his own glory, and our salvation; And in this sence, though afflictions are the onely sure inheritance of Humanity, * (whose income is
*Job.5. Teares, his rent for life, Cares, and Feares: his outgoings, horrour and trouble in the force of natures dissolution) they are more peculiarly the
* Lam.3. Heb.12. Portion of the righteous, * who
Amos. 3. like a square die will stand firme though cast upon any chance,

chance, (which made *Socrates* say; an honeſt man was a ſquare man, one that would be himſelfe in all conditions) and as a well built Arch will ſtand the faſter, by addition of waite, and burden, or with the Center in the circumference be fixt with *Iob*, though all worldly things move in their viciſſitudes, and ſeverall changes to evill about him: knowing he that wounds will heale, and not onely in famine redeem from death, in warre from the power of the ſword, but will ſet him above misfortunes, and make them all ſubſervient to his good,* turning the Serpent of afflictions with *Aarons* into a Rod budding new, and freſh joyes, and teach him Salamander like, to live in flames, and enter-

* Job. 5.

taine all events with evenneſſe, and patience, knowing that the ſtrongeſt windes, if he ſayle before them, will but convey him to Chriſt, who commands the windes and Seas, and they obey. But the better to prop, and ſupport our weake, and tottering reſolutions, I will raiſe ſome pillars of comfort to reſt upon, if we looke after and follow the examples both of Chriſt, * whoſe Cratch was a Crucifixion; his whole life one continued Paſſion; and all the holy men of God, * who found no other way to heaven then that of thornes; and bare all the waight of miſery, that was laid upon them, as if they felt it no more, then thoſe that live in the circle of the Ayre, and yet finde no ponderouſneſſe in it, becauſe nothing

Iſ.53.
Iſa.18.
1 Pet. 2.
Chr. 21.
7.
0.1.21.
2.20.
Sam.3.18
Sam. 18.
6.
Eſay 39.8.
Micha 7.9.
Ro.5.13.

thing is heavy in its own element, and that croſſes, and loſſes being the matter, and Principle as it were out of which a Chriſtian is formed, cannot make him ſinke under the preſſure of them; eſpecially, if we conſider the two chiefe ends for which they are ſent, Gods glory, mans ſalvation, and every way Advantage.

First, afflictions are ſent many times for Gods glory; not as puniſhments for our ſinnes, though they are alwayes the meritorious and occaſionall cauſe of judgements. Thus the blinde man in the Goſpell wanted his ſight, * (and with *Tobias* recovered it by this gaul of afflictions) that we might ſee the power, and mercy of God in his deliverance 1. *Jo. 9. 2.

both from corporall and ſpirituall blindneſſe; for as contraries are the beſt Comments upon one another; ſo Gods Goodneſſe, and Greatneſſe moſt appeares in bringing health out of Sickneſſe, Light out of Darkneſſe, and forming all the well ordered, and various beauties of the world out of nothing, or a Chaos, and great Maſſe of confuſion; happineſſe out of miſery, glory out of ſufferings, giving victory in thraldome, and triumph to his when conquered, as the true trophies of Chriſtian magnanimitie, and moſt legible Characters of his favour to his Church, which with the buſh
*Exod. 3. 2. is ever burning, * yet never to be conſumed; & like the Arke however floating upon the proud imperious high ſwelling waves,

waves, ſinkes not, but when threatned to be involved in the whole worlds generall deſtruction, having but one common winding-Sheet (the pleated waters) and as it were one common buriall place, then is preſerved, and by thoſe watery riſing mountaines but lifted up the neerer heaven, God as it were like another Neptune imbarking himſelfe in (and hazarding Shipwrack with) his Church.

Secondly, they are ſent for our ſalvation, not as a cauſe of, but way to glory; as they are a meanes of our holineſſe here (*in that whoſoever will live godly in Chriſt Jeſus muſt ſuffer afflictions*) and happineſſe hereafter; there being no way to aſcend the mount of honour but by the 2.

* 2 Tim. 3 12.

steps of vertue through a rough, and difficult path; no Haven to be gained unlesse we passe the straits; no way to heaven but by the gates of hell; for unlesse we fill up the sufferings of Christ in his body the Church, and beare his crosse we cannot be partakers of his Crown, induring being the condition of Reigning with him. * In that his first intention, when he destroyes, is to Preserve us, which is the Reason, as *David* saith, *the wicked have no bands in their death, receive not their punishment here.* And who would not upon these terms lose a life to save it, who may by saving lose it? nay, what Marchant would not to recover his wished haven with a wealthy lading be contented to have his vessell weather

* Act. 14. 22. Colos. 1. 24. 1 Tim. 2. 2. Ps. 73. 4.

ther beaten, and torne? and much more a Christian, that is a man of warre; a Barke built for all weathers, stormes, and Calmes, knowing that the rough Sea proves the Pilot, and makes him keep at the sterne and helme, using all holy endevours to avoid every Rock, and Sand of Temptation, and ply the pumpe upon the least leake, knowing that the smallest sinne unrepented, neglected, or not with *Jonas* throwne over-bord to appease the storme, will sinke the tallest vessell, and better unlade all then the man should perish. Nay, shall our Lord, Head, and Generall be all wounded, torn, and exposed to all degrees of suffering for us, and shall not we (his Church, and members) undergoe some troubles, indure

dure a ſcratch, or weare a ſcarre for him? ſhall hee drinke up the full Cup, and ſhowres of his Fathers wrath, and ſhall not wee taſte of thoſe few remaining drops for him? ſhall innocence ſuffer, and guilt goe free? nay, ſhall God dye for man, and man undergoe no preſſure for God? nay, for himſelfe, his own advantage, where diſſectings are recompactings; God forbid. No, away with ſuch puſillanimity, my ſoule, and leave not thy Saviour in his ſufferings for thee. Though thou art called with *Simon* of *Cyrene* to take up his Croſſe (or rather thine, which he bore for thee) and beare it for him, till thou comeſt to Golgatha, the place of Sculs, (thy grave) nay, further, if poſſible.

* Iſay. 53.

possible. For as a devoute man said, if he could finde or apprehend any defect of joy in heaven, it would be onely in that he could not there suffer for his Saviour. Though what we undergoe here is not more for his glory, then our benefit. And therefore as Musick is sweeteſt, when expiring, let the laſt ſwanlike Act of our ſufferings be but harmoniouſly accordant to Chriſt in that ſweet ditty of his, *not mine, but thy will be done.* And a Raviſhment of delight will ſo poſſeſſe our ſoules, as we ſhall onely account our life from our Death, and that our birth day to Eternity, Our eve or vigil to our great feſtivall at the marriage of the Lambe; for as God moved upon the waters in the Creation, before they

they brought forth the firſt Creature, ſo afflictions are now thoſe many waters, in which God moves to make us conceive in our hearts by the holy Ghoſt, like the wombe of the virgine, till Chriſt be formed in us, and we bring forth holineſſe, which he ever crownes with happineſſe. Now though theſe are the firſt, Primary, and Principall ends, why Gods children are thus brought forth with labour, & ſorrow (a curſe as ancient as ſin it ſelfe) there are many other practicall uſes, and pious conſiderations we ſhould entertaine them with; for as one ſaith, *Schola crucis eſt ſchola lucis*; *and Oratio, Lectio, temptatio*, the rough, but ready way to Heaven, and the troubled waters of Repentant teares the cleereſt Perſpective

in

in an Eclipſe of Gods favour to ſee his face ſhine in our devotions, which uſually riſe, and fall with the waves of afflictions, the greateſt miſery ordinarily making us moſt importunate for mercy (as one depth calling upon another) and moſt carefull of our wayes. Like the Horſe that ever goeth ſureſt, and beſt when he feeles the ſpurre, and bridle. the mariner that moſt uſeth his plummet, and compaſſe in ſtormes. And thus we will conſider afflictions.

Firſt, as they are incentives to Prayer, and like fire extract the beſt incenſe of our devotions, making them to aſcend in a holy flame of zeale to mediate our peace, and pacifie an exaſperated Deity, whoſe Power, Juſtice, and Mercy are all 1.

all ingaged to deliver them, that in afflictions call upon him.

* Pſ.30.34 107. Hoſ. 5 Eſay 49. 3. Lam. 3. * For then we doe their errand, and cannot miſſe of a Gracious Audience no more then *Abraham*, where Duſt and Aſhes pleaded with hi smaker, and as it were ſo charmed his eare with this Oratory, that importunity it ſelfe could not

* Gen. 18. weary him.* Nay with this ſpirituall Ingine, Impotence and weakneſſe overcomes Power and Omnipotence, puts manacles upon the hands of God: and (with an humble reverence be it ſpoken) worſts him in the conflict, making him cry out, *Let me alone*, or *till thou art gone*, *I can doe nothing*, as to *Moſes*. Thus a faithfull Prayer workes all kinds of miracles, makes the Heavens, Earth, and Seas obey.

Exod. 32. Numb. 14.

For

For when the gaſping Earth is dying for Thirſt, *Elias* can by Prayer quicken and enliven it. It can fix the Sunne in the firmament, as in a Center, give Eares to the Grave, and make them open, and life to the dead; And ever neſts a Chriſtian, (like a Dove in the clifts of the Rock,) in the wounds of his Saviour, ſo as he cannot when aſſaulted, be ſenſible of any Dangers, but reſts ſecure in ſtormes: whereas the wicked mans Proſperity is but like the winter Sun-ſhine, late up, and all wayes ſetting in thick clouds, and like the bird *Cigelus Suidas* ſpeakes of, that alwayes dies in the act of feathering. And therefore with *Moſes*, let us rather chuſe to ſuffer afflictions with the Children of God then to injoy the Jo. 12:

pleaſures

pleasures of sinne for a season: knowing, that the most obscured, and benighted Christian can by the gentle breath of a fervent Prayer, or the stronger and more contracted winds of sighes, and Groanes disperse those thick vapours that Eclipse his happinesse, inlighten that Darkenesse and ushers in a most bright, glorious, and cheerfull morning. So the Prophet *David*, *Heavinesse may endure for a night, but Ioy cometh with the breake of day*, *when we are saluted with the beames of the rising Sunne of Righteousnesse in our soules; Onely let us observe this, that (though in some waters the least sayle makes most speed) in these Seas all sayles must be hoysed, all the affections stirring, though a Penitents loudest voyce

* Psal. 30.

Is. 54. 1. 8.

voyce in his eye full of teares (not his tongue full of words) if God blow upon thoſe waters, and make them flow. And therefore one ſaith well, Teares in Prayer, or the Prayer of Teares are the blotting out of the hand-writing, that is againſt us, (as a gracious meanes, no meritorious cauſe) and the *uſury* by which the joyes of heaven are multiplyed to us; Gods free preventing Grace in the application of the blood of Chriſt, being our Stock, and Principle. Thus afflictions alarum Prayer, and Prayer routs and vanquiſheth afflictions. It is a *Moſes* in the gap, an *Elias*, the Chariots and Horſemen of Iſrael, by which we conquer.

Secondly, Afflictions are to be entertained with delight

* James 1. 2. (for Saint *Iames*) as they work every way for our good, and make Gods anger his Love to us; which made *David* cry
* Psa. 119. 71. out, *It is good for me that I have beene afflicted, and taught thy Lawes*; and teach us by many other expreſſions, what *Lemnius* ſaith, *noſtræ ſalutis avidus*, God is moſt endevouring to love us, when he moſt corrects us, and ſends Croſſes like his meſſengers in the Goſpell to compell thoſe that neglect his Invitation, and to draw them by force to the meanes of Salvation; his Love, Patience, and
* Pſ. 6. 126. 6. long ſuffering brings not in to him, ever making the matter of a good mans ſorrow the cauſe
* Jer. 31. 16. of his rejoycing; for Afflictions no ſooner ſtirre up to repentance (as in *Ephraim*) but Repentance bringeth Reprive, and

and Pardon, by a refined Alchimy turning all things into good for us, and extracting the moſt Soveraigne Cordials out of the rankeſt poyſons, the beſt Mithridate from the moſt venemous ſcorpions, ever making the Lilly amongſt the Thornes (the Embleme of the Church) retaine its whiteneſſe, her Purity and Innocence, however ſcratched and torne, ſtill gathering beauty from her skars, and with the Roſe ſweetneſſe, when it hangs amongſt the Briars, but withering, and abating of its Odours, if once pulled from them. * Rom. 8.

Thirdly, as they are a meanes of our Perſeverance, in that they doe not onely call us home, but keep us ſteddy in our returne to it; and if we either ſlack in, or deviate from 3.

our way in Piety, like the Riders hand, and heele, they many times reſtraine our wandrings, and quicken us in our pace and progreſſe towards heaven, and as the Teather of the ſoule, bounds, and confines us, when our untamed diſpoſitions would furiouſly breake forth into many Extravagances, God many times curing us by Contraries; Sodoms fulnes of bread by Egypts famine; *hedging* us in a narrow & ſtraite path with Thornes to walk in, when we would perhaps lay all waſte before us that ſtands in oppoſition to our propoſed ends, deſtroy Propriety, and not onely uſurpe upon others intereſts, and ruine our owne, but invade God in his (the too much I feare practiſed ſinne of theſe dayes) Onely the Princes of

of *Iuda*, will not, I hope, be like those that would remove the bounds, both Civill with reference to the State, the fence of common interest, morall bounds, the square, and Standard of our obedience, and Characters of Pure Nature, or Evangelicall (both Practicall, and Contemplative) by which we are to fashion, and order our selves in the worship of God, the inward, and outward man, thoughts, actions, and devotions, not onely acting, but enacting mischiefe, as a Law; *thus the brightest day, if the Sunne set in a cloud, will loose its Garland; our Ripest beginnings without sutable proceedings prove fruitles; our best appearances but Ciphers, which how capacious soever in the figure, and taking up the

* Hos. 5. 10, 11.

* Psal. 94

greateſt roomes, with God ſignifie nothing. But if when falling, God lend us his hand, by Afflictions cauſe our Perſeverance, Our Perſeverance in Goodneſſe (in quick, and ſharp trials)as one of the blood Royall, and immediate heires of Gods Kingdome, crownes our Afflictions,and drawes that oyle of Gladneſſe out of thoſe flints, if we are not cowardly jealous, in ſuſpecting what we moſt deſire, but by Faith rely upon Gods promiſe for it.

4. Fourthly, Afflictions are to
* Heb. 12. be borne as they come from
*Rev.3.19 the hand of a Father, * with
* Prov.3. 11.12. bowels and Compaſſion, more of Love then Anger, to Reforme, not Puniſh us. And if
* Luke 18 neceſſity, which is alwayes an ill Companion (many times, a bad Counſellor) doth at any time,

time, with the Prodigall make us returne to our Father with a modeſt baſhfulneſſe, and humble confeſſion of our ſins, our Remembring them, will make him forget them; Our ſhaming our ſelves will be his Juſtification of us: neither will God expect our Return, but accepts the Reſolution for the Performance. For no ſooner did this loſt Sonne purpoſe to goe back to his Father, but He goes forth of himſelfe to prevent him with kindneſſe, forſaking as it were his Greatneſſe in a Gratious Condeſcent to meet and embrace him: and like a carefull nurſe never ſuffers him to fall againe, but to teach him the better to ſtand, and looke to his footing, never layes the Rod upon him, but (as we doe a whip upon a

* Pſal.34. 50. Iſ.21.54. Toppe) to make him goe the better for being well ſcourged, and layes his Corraſives to his dead fleſh, not that he delights in his Paine, but intends his Cure.

5. Fifthly, we ought to beare Afflictions cheerefully and Thankfully, if we conſider how much our ſinnes deſerve, and with what a gentle hand we are puniſhed, God ever rewarding beyond our merits, correcting much leſſe then our Iniquities challenge from his Juſtice; in that he delights to ſhew mercy, and is alwayes unwilling to inflict Puniſhment, (but calling it his *ſtrange worke*, as it were declines it,) nor ſtrikes at all, but in mercy (and that his greateſt, in that he is then ſaid to goe out of himſelfe) ever with *Jonathan* ſhooting

* Eſ. 59.
* Ez. 3.
* Lam. 3.
* Rom. 6.
* Jer. 46. 27, 28.

ſhouting his Arrows to warne, not wound us, never Purging, Lancing, nor Cutting, but for our health, and Recovery. Nay he is ſo ſlow to puniſh, as that he calls Afflictions the *vials of his wrath* from their ſhape, and ſtraitnes; * to ſhew how hardly he pours them out upon us, and never but in meaſure, having his ſtaffe to ſupport, as well as his Rod to humble us, his Cork as well as his lead, when he ſinkes us to keepe us floating, ſo as we cannot be drown'd, Chriſt our head being above water. And God to aſſure us the more of a happy iſſue to every temptation *(if we waite upon him in the way of his judgements, and judge our ſelves to prevent being further judged) will as he hath promiſed, make the E-

* Lam. 3.

* Pſal. 23

* 1 Cor. 10. 13.

lements

lements looſe their natures, and be our Protectors, not Executioners. *For when we walke through the fire, it ſhall not burne us, and when we goe through the waters, they ſhall not over-flow us;* * But the *flued waters ſhall become a hard Pavement to our feet (as to Chriſts upon the Sea) and the fiery furnace a ſafe [illegible]ring place, againſt our Enemies; for God is alwayes tipping his ſpeare with hony, like *Ionathans*, to refreſh as well as wound us.

Is.26.8.

† 1 Cor. 11.31.

Is.43.2.

6. Sixthly, Afflictions are ſent to teach us Humility, the beſt Dreſſe, and Ornament of a vertuous ſoule, and to correct the high-towring vapour of Pride. Thus *David*, that thought in his Proſperity *hee ſhould never be removed*, in Adverſity

verſity could acknowledge it was God *that made his mountaine ſo ſtrong* : which was the Reaſon alſo that Saint *Pauls Thorne in his fleſh* * was not removed, to bring him to the knowledge of the Rock out of which he was hewen, to remember what he was in nature,* and in foundation but duſt: that with the Peacock all his high creſted vanities, and richeſt plume of Graces inherent, looking to his feet, his icy, ſlippery, and fraile bottome, might not make him proud, but ſtanding by Gods Grace onely he might ſtill fear to fall, falling from that feare being the undermining of the whole frame, In that the higheſt and firmeſt buildings are alwayes raiſed from the loweſt foundations; And the moſt

* 2 Cor. 12

* Pſal. 103

most improved Christian ever appearing like a *Pyramis* (the higher it's built) the lesse, and lesse in his owne eyes (though as one obserues well, Pride is natures shirt, that sticks closest to him, and he puts off last) ever saying with Saint *Paul* in his visions, Revelations, and unexampled Piety, *It is not I, but the Grace of God in me.* Thus with the heathen *Pliny* to *Marius*, we may say, Afflictions bring us home to our selves; so that if we could but performe in Prosperity, what we promise in Adversity, we should be living Saints, not Proud sinners Doing Justly, loving mercy, and walking humbly with our God. *

* Isa. 1. 1 King. 8. Mich 6.8.

Seventhly, we are to endure Afflictions, as they fit and prepare our soyl for better fruits, and

and make us abound in Piety, and Good works; * God by an Egyptian midwife many times bringeth forth a true Israelite, and by pruning his vine, beating his spices, correcting his servants makes their fruits and Graces more full, fragrant and diffusive. * For like the good husbandman, that plowes, and harrowes his ground, to make it bring forth the fuller harvest, that cudgels, and thresheth his walnut tree to make it *Teeme* and *Layde* its bowes, God also studies all wayes to improve our Graces, and his owne Glory, ever sending a winter before a spring, frosts and snow to soften and mellow the mould of our Earthly hearts, the better to prepare us for his good seed, and a Rich returne, though indeed

* 2 Tim. 3.12. Eccles. 2 Hos. 5. 15.

* Psal. 119 75.

* Jo. 10.

* Isa. 5.

* Psal. 32. 34.

deed we doe in that but gather, and carry in for our ſelves, when in crowning us hee crownes but his own worke in us: firſt making us beare his Croſſe, and then weare his Garland, all afflictions being but as the Cloud and Pillar of fire before the Iſraelites, to protect, not deſtroy us, to defend us from our Enemies and lead us over *Iordan* to our Promiſed land, Chriſt Jeſus.

Iſ. 54. Matth. 26. 39.

8. Eightly, we may be encouraged to undergoe Afflictions here, becauſe they are not durable, though weighty, in that Chriſts Prayer hath made this Cup paſſant; So as the ſtormes of Afflictions, when they thicken moſt upon us, are not ſtayed but moving, nay, flying away upon the wings of the winde, never enduring above a moment

ment in the *Ephemerides* of di- * Is. 55.
vine Providence, however te- * Psa. 31.
dious if we measure them by 34.
our measures of Time (Clocks,
and dialls;) nay not a minute or
expence of the least graine of
Sand, if computed by the
glasse of Eternity, (which is
ever running, but never wast-
ing) or the immense duration
of the rewards, when Faith,
Repentance, and all the Con-
stellations of other Graces in
us, shall like the hand upon the
Diall, Point at, nay, shew the
Meridian, Declining, and Pe-
riod of our day of Affliction,
and that afternoone halfe E-
ternity of happinesse we are go-
ing to be possessed of; for with
Saint *Paul* Our troubles here * 2 Cor 4.
are for continuance nothing, 17.
or the least part of Time, but a
Moment, for weight light, and
the

the moſt ponderous but a feather in the ſcales with more exceeding, nay Eternall, nay Eternall waight, nay Eternall waight of Glory, Glory for ſhame, waighty for light, Eternity of injoying for a momentary ſuffering; * and therefore though a perplexed fancy diſturbing the Organs of Reaſon may like a falſe glaſſe multiply our troubles, and dangers, let us with a ſteddy faith behold them in their own Dimenſions, finite in reſpect both of their meaſure and continuance, And we ſhall ſoone be brought to ſay with Saint *Paul, I have fought a good fight, I have finiſhed my courſe*, and *now there is laid up for me a Crowne of glory.*

*Rev. 7. 14

Ninthly, Afflictions are to be welcomed, as they are ſeales

seales of our Adoption, Badges of our Profession, Earnests of Grace, and beginnings of Glory. * The Red Sea, through which we must passe to the Land of Canaan, the Crowne of Thornes we must weare here, if we will have one of Gold with Christ in heaven. * The onely Thistles, from which we may gather Figgs, and Briers, that yeeld grapes for wine to cheere the heart, being once strengthned with all might, according to his glorious Power, with all Patience, and long suffering with joyfulnesse. * For with the Roman Orators, as he lives not that hath onely the happinesse of this life in his thoughts, so he never dyeth, nor is ever sensible of temporary troubles, that can cast them up rightly,

* 2 Tim. 3. 11. 12. Job. 5. Matth. 10. 16. 14. Heb. 12.

* 1 Pet. 4. 13. Matth. 5. 20.

* Colos. 1.

and be willing to change a house of clay, a Breath, or vapour of smoke, a Body of Death, and garment of corruption for Immortality, and honour; a Region of Death for the land of the living; the life of man for that of Angels; a vally of Teares for a mount of Joy.

10. Tenthly, consider that God layes his Afflictions upon us, in regard of his Propriety in us; Making that the ground of his care over us; * Thus he weeds his Garden, dresseth, and fenceth his Vineyard with Briars, and Thornes, both to defend, and make it fruitfull, shakes his Trees that the Rotten fruit might fall off, and they take the better rooting, lo being the highest end, and chiefest fruit of Afflictions to take away sin,

* Isay. 51. Ezek. 34 11.15.

and

and preſerve the ſinner, to deſtroy the worme and cancer, that would ot herwiſe deſtroy the Tree; many times to give it ſhade, leaſt too much ſunne ſhould dry and wither it; or like that in the early ſpring produce many gay flowers and odoriferous ſmels to court the ſenſes, but withall ingender millions of flyes, and vermine, to ſpoile them; for ſo the pleaſures of this world are but a *Ionas* gourd, ſumer fruit, of ſhort continuance, wheras the winter fruits, that indure moſt of cold and nipping froſts, are for durance, and laſting. Thus though great miſts doe ever midwife in Calmes; the Ayre is then moſt tainted, and dangerous, whereas thunder brings forth a moſt wholeſome, pure, ſerene and bright

skie. Nay, Afflictions makes us every way better in our ſpirituall condition, and fit to be owned by the Father of ſpirits, who like a cunning Lapidary tries his Jewels before he gives them a Rich ſetting, that if true, not Counterfeit, *he might ſpare them, as a man ſpareth his onely Sonne*; nay, they are Gods bullets ſhot againſt an Armour of proofe, to trie, not peirce it; there being more ſtrength in the Innocency of his Saints, then in all Goliahs Braſſe and Irons, that he might treaſure it up in his Militia for the honour of his Saints, and beautifying of his owne habitation.

* Malach. 3 17.

II. Eleventhly, Afflictions are Gods love tokens to us, the Dialect in which he woes us, and true Anagram of our ſins,

(in

(in that we may usually read our sinnes, and faylings in the specification of his judgements upon us) by them to make us consider the deformity of all other objects, and unite our affections in him; the rather when we see all the Darling delights of this world so soone overshadowed; and alwayes tempered with the bitternesse of some temporary crosse, to distrellish our taste, and abate our Appetite to them; so as the rest of our bodies, many times proves our minds exercise; and our empty houres, most fill us with vaine and vexings thoughts; at best affording us but lesse paine, no absolute freedome from troubles, in our most retired retirements; for when the doores of our senses are lockt up, the Phan-

taſie doth many times *affright us with viſions and terrifie us with dreames*, Job.7.14. making our waking Conſciences, often Alarum our ſleepy ſoules, by all this reſtleſneſſe to bring us to an everlaſting reſt; and ſhall we neglect his bounty, and receive with a wrinckled brow what he gives us with a ſummer and gracious aſpect? *for to you it is given, not onely to be-*
* Ph.1.29 *leeve, but to ſuffer for Chriſt.* * And ſhall we refuſe to weare his favours, livery, and Cogniſance (though a croſſe) that are thus effects of his affection to us and ſo not only in their ſpring but ſtreame; In that his providence ſo ſteers the action, and orders the event in all things, as a ſparrow fals not without his leave, nor can the devill enter into a ſwine (ſo little is the largeſt

largeſt empire here) without his permiſſion, and makes all the variety of Accidents (how contrary ſoever the lines are drawne) to center in our good; ſo communicative of himſelfe is his goodneſſe to us. And therefore let not the clay diſpute with the Potter, walking brickle earth with the God of heaven. For his actions are alwayes juſt, and good; nay full of mercy to us, though harſh; his Phyſick wholſome, though unpleaſant, in that ſometimes his greateſt mercy, is not to ſhew mercy, * not with-hold the lance, when it is to open an impoſtumation. And therefore, correct me O Lord to amend me, wound me to heale me, kill me to make me live, take away all to give me thy ſelfe. And doe not

Rom. 8. 28.

* Hoſ. 4. 13 14.
* Iſai. 1. 5.
Lam. 1.
Wiſd. 12. 1.

Ps 81. 11, 12. hate me so much, as not to seem to hate me at all, when it is the greatest punishment not to be punished, and the greatest improvement of our wealth to lose it, and our lives too for Christ, where the interest he payes is so great, the Returne so infinite we receive here with persecutions; and so immense and unexhaustible in the world to come; for so the Apostle, *Eye hath not seene* (yet the eye is a nimble sayler, and hath travelled farre, and seene much) *eare hath not heard* (yet the eare hath heard more then the eye hath seene, being as it were the Portall, or gate of the soule, by which knowledge enters, and so apprehends more of the beauties, and Beatitudes of that place then can by all the other sences be discerned

Rev. 22. 12.
Os. 12. 5.
Ez. 24. 13.
Mar. 10. 29. 30.
Matth. 10.
Act. 14. 22.
Job. 5.
1 Cor. 12. 31.

discerned here, in the dim and opake glasse of the creatures, though God is here very legible in many of his Attributes) *nor hath it entered into the thought of man, the joyes that shall be revealed* (yet thought hath a kinde of infinity in it, and graspes more at once, then either eye, or eare can commensurate with the largest extended faculties, and most unbounded dimensions of their severall wayes of comprehension, and discerning) having the winges, and motion of a spirit, the capacity of an intelligence, yet still short of imagining, the vast incomprehensibleness of that which passeth Imagination; For such is Heaven, a circle within a circle, many infolded mysterious joyes, which will be best

best conceived by thinking what we cannot conceive; and becauſe it cannot enter into us here, let us expect with patience, till we enter into it hereafter, and heare with comfort that bleſſed voice of *come ye bleſſed of my Father, & go into the Ioy that is prepared for you from the begining of the world*; And not onely ſo, *but enter into thy Maſters joy* nor onely that, that *is prepared of God for them that love him*, but that which is God, the beatificall viſion it ſelfe. Yet here the Saints of God ſee the dawning of that day, a light ſpringing out of darkneſſe, * and beames of comfort in the blackeſt night of Affliction, ſome love glances in the moſt unkinde divorce, which is never long, though it ſeemes long to us.

* Pſal. 112. 4.

Twelfthly,

Twelfthly, Afflictions are sent, as trials from God, and a meanes of evidencing to our selves the truth of our faith, by the exercise of it : (as it is the *assurance of things hoped for, the evidence of things* * not seen) which made *Abraham* rely upon the Promise, not disputing the meanes of its performance, knowing that *Phœnix* like God could raise him up a seed from the dead ashes of his *Isaac*; though in him he offered the comfort of his life, the staffe of his age, the summe and Recapitulation of all his numerous posterity: possessing as it were future Joyes, and by them was made unsensible of present troubles, or at least not regarding them, but endured that *Crosse, despised the shame, looking unto Jesus, the finisher* 12.

* 1 Peter. 1

Ilai. 40. 31.

Gen. 22.

as

* Heb. 12. 2. *as well as the author of his faith*,* the comfortable beames of the ſunne of righteouſneſſe ſtill beating upon his ſoule in their ſtrongeſt reflex, in the darkeſt and moſt clouded night of Temptation, which can never be hindered by the ſtormy windes, becauſe Celeſtiall; for true Faith becomes the ſtronger by difficulties, ever preferring the Croſſe of Chriſt to the Triumphes of Emperours, and all the Crownes of Kings, and with certaine fiſhes mentioned by *Pliny*, is ever ſwimming againſt the ſtreame, to recover the fountaine Chriſt, knowing that all Refreſhments are originally and virtually there; and with the needle in the mariners compaſſe is fixt, & unmoveable in the greateſt tempeſts, becauſe not governed by the

the turbulent, and unconſtant winds, but the unchangeable Heavens, and never count it any victory to trample upon a worme (any ſmall triall) or to wade through a ſhallow River, but grapples with and overcomes the greateſt oppoſitions, knowing Croſſes cannot be ſo large as to out-circle their Crownes. Neither is this all, for faith can here make abſent things preſent, and conquer, when conquered: and though humane friendſhip is like Quick-ſilver ſoone incorporating with the beſt mettles, but in difficulties and the fire conveyes it ſelfe away: faith then knowes divine helpe to be moſt preſent, having the Angels for her Corps de Guard, and God his Pavilion round about her. Nay, in that

that fire, as with *Moſes* in the buſh (a ſtrange pallace for Divinity to inthrone in) rather then his ſhall want a comforter; for if his people be in Captivity, or that *Aſſur* afflicts them without a cauſe, they truſting in him in their diſtreſſe, God will not be kept above in heaven without a * *what doe I here?* And *I will goe down*, (O the exalted humility of our God) to *be their preſent helpe in trouble.* Their help in, (not alwayes their deliverance from) trouble. In durance their companion, making their priſon their heaven, the perſecutors Chaines, * their Bracelets, and Ornaments the Lyons, their Guardians, not deſtroyers, as to *Daniel.* In that God, and a Chriſtian are but one in their ſufferings,

* Iſ. 52. 4. 5
* Gen. 46. 6.
* Pſ. 46. 1
* Gen. 39. 21.

sufferings, * *for I am afflicted* † *in their afflictions*, saith he; and they that persecute us, persecute our Jesus in us, (as in Saint *Paul*) who will be sure to releive us in our necessities, (having ingaged all his Attributes for it) and make our almost emptied Cruse a never to be exhausted spring, the Ravens our Caterers, and fishes to bring mony in their mouthes to pay our ordinary, rather then we should want to defray our charges, (as in the case of Tribute) nay, rather then the faithfull should suffer to destruction, (his Church which should appeare like an Army well ordered with banners both for beauty, and terror) God himselfe will in their march to Canaan be both Harbinger, Quarter-master, Generall,

† Is. 63. 9.

Generall, and Sutler to the Campe, making the wildernesse a downe bed, the Rocke a Seller, & the heavens a larder to afford them all necessaries; Nay, he will beyond it feed them to delight, even with Quailes, and Manna, satisfying them as he did *David* in his most naked and abject condition: And as a Banquet to his meat (before the cloth be taken away, and these outward things fail) he wil give us Christ and in him; a full taste of his mercies, the onely store-house, and true Magazine, nay, the abstract, and Epitome of all the treasures both of heaven, and earth; and higher I cannot soare in this meditation. For if he spare not his sonne, but deliver him up, not onely for, but to us, *shall he not with him*

him freely give us all things? * as the Apoſtle argues; all neceſſaries here, and laſting joyes hereafter, but taking downe our earthen Cottages to rebuild them ſtately Palaces, making every graine of duſt ſpring innumerous freſh glories to us. * Rom. 8. 32. Jo. 6

Thirteenthly, Afflictions are ſent, for the exerciſe of our charities in ſuffering with, cenſuring of, and giving examples of a holy ſubmiſſion to others. 13.

Firſt, In ſuffering with others, compaſſion being Paſſion at at the rebound, for *who is afflicted, and I burne, or ſuffer not* ſaith Saint *Paul?* Nay this fire ſoftens our natures, makes them more pliable, malliable, and eaſie to take impreſſions from others ſufferings, and ſo

compassionate as to make their miseries our unhappinesse, as if one soule did animate divers bodies, and we live, and dye in one another, as it was in the Apostles times, which is the true box of Spicknard in the Canticles Christ powreth out to comfort, and refresh his spouse with, when neerest fainting under the crosse, in that their sufferings are his Crucifixions. * And if God thus became man, (tooke our Ignominy and infirmities upon him) for us, shall wemen become beasts to one an other? devest our selves of this most noble part of humanity, and be so farre from Christians, as not to be reasonable creatures? in our tender compassion to others, but like freebooters Rifle and Rob them to in-

* Isa. 63. Act. 9. 5.

rich

rich our ſelves, when they ſhould be objects of our pitty and releife; for there ought to be that harmony and concord amongſt us, as we ſhould endevour like one Inſtrument of many ſtrings to tune all our faculties, and affections into a ſweet agreement, that there might be no jarring amongſt our ſelves, nor diſagreement in our ſervice of God, that being well ſet by one key, we may like two lutes (which by a holy ſympathy will both ſound when one is but ſtruck) the one feele the others motion, though moſt when like Inſtruments whoſe Pegs are wound up, their ſtrings ſcrued to the height, by any outward violence they make the ſhrilleſt ſounds, according to that of the Apoſtle, * *Remember* * Heb. 13.

them in bonds, as bound, being our ſelves of the body; eſpecially when I am ſure, that if a Toe (the meaneſt and remoteſt member) be but trod upon, Chriſt our head feeles it.

Secondly, our charitie muſt be exerciſed in cenſuring others Actions; for ſo *love hopeth all things, beleeveth all things*, * and ever takes them in the beſt ſence, is never ſevere, nor poſitive in judging them by their outward condition, in that the Corne is as much thraſht as the ſtraw, the Gold as much tryed (though not waſted) in the fire as the Droſſe. Nay many times much more; for there may be a Rich *Dives*, whoſe Cups over-flow with wine, when poore *Lazarus* is glad to refreſh himſelfe with the common

1 Cor. 13.

mon Element of water;* a good tree may appeare withered, blasted, and dying with the violence of outward stormes, or recoyling of the sap of Grace to the Root in some stronge temptation;* when the fruitlesse bay tree is green, and flourishing, so as with the wise man we may say, none can judge of love, or hatred, by what is before him (of no mans spirituall condition by his temporall) in that all things sublunary come alike to all. For it is not Gods dispensation of outward blessings, but our use of them, that makes the difference. And though the shadow of his wings be a shelter, * in the hot sun-shine of Persecution; none but a *David* can then truly rejoyce in it, and there finde comfort, and refreshment. Thirdly,

* Luke 16.

* Eccles. 9. 1, 2.

* Ps. 63. 7.

Thirdly, our charities are exerciſed by Afflictions, when we teach as well by example as Precept, in our cheerefull, innocent, and charitable undergoing them. Thus Saint *Paul* propounds himſelfe a pa-
1 Cor.4. 6. terne for us to tranſcribe, that with thoſe in the Revelations we might follow the Lambe whereſoever he goeth, though not in equall paces, yet in ſlow motions, who thus ſuf-
Joh.14.4 Heb.12. 2. fered to leave us an example (and he that was the way ſure
Jo.14.6. beſt knew how to guide it) that we might follow his patterne at leaſt, if not commands; for *Regis ad exemplum*, the King is the great wheele in the State, that carries the inferiour ones with him; the examples of great men uſually having a compulſary power in them, even

even from a principle in nature. Thus one Deere leads the whole heard, one bird the flock, one * *Peter* a congregation. And therefore we ought to carry the lanterne in the Poope, to let the light of our Actions ſtill ſhew the way we ſteere in the greateſt ſtormes to recover a happy haven, that other weather beaten Paſſengers may by it know how to ride out a Tempeſt, and arrive the ſame port. Thus a dead man ſometimes makes a living Chriſtian, and propagates by ſuffering, the blood of the Martyres being the generative ſeed of the Church, *Phœnix* like one riſing out of the urne, and aſhes of the other, the effuſion of one mans blood being as it were the transfuſion of the ſame ſpirits into many,

* Gal. 2. 14.

or with *Pythagoras*, one ſoule animating (in a ſucceſſion) divers bodies, ever gathering ſtrength under preſſures, with the Camomile growing beſt when moſt trod on, and with the Palme moſt ſpreading when oppreſſed with any waight. Thus God defects, and anatomizes ſome, in them to read a Lecture to all: and ſo truly makes our Croſſes become a Crowne of rejoycing
2 Theſ. 1. 4. 5. to others, as the Apoſtle ſaith, and our Afflictions but like the ſhaking of a ripe flower, which by it ſheds ſeeds, from whence many more doe ſpring, and grow, till the hand of God doe pluck them to adorne his owne Garland with in heaven.

12. Fourtenthly, Gods hand upon us cals for ours upon our ſelves, humiliation as well as humility,

humility, and not with the worme turne againe upon him that treads upon us, but we must judge & afflict our selves, and be most forward in a holy revenge to crucifie those sins, that most crucifie our Saviour, and by their death to give life to the contrary vertues, by our outward compertment shewing our inward affections, and not onely beare when God layes it on, but take up the Crosse to Crosse our selves, when our sinnes, or Gods threatned judgements cals for it, not putting the evill day from us with joy and gladnesse, eating of flesh, and drinking of wine, (which is to be possessed with a strange devill, if taken in excesse, someties casting us into the water, and sometimes into the fire) when

when God cals us to weeping and mourning, and baldneſſe, the true Emblems of Repentance; not court our eyes with vaine objects, ſuffering them to be burning glaſſes of luſt to inflame the heart, when they ſhould be fountaines of teares to quench the inflamed wrath of God againſt us for our ſins, not feaſt to nouriſh, when we ſhould faſt to mortifie ſinne in us, not raviſh our ſenſes with harmonious Muſick, when our ſad conſort ſhould be made up of ſighes, and grones (the moſt melodious voyces for Gods quire, though harſh, and ſhrill in our eares) not gratifie our Palates by plundering all the Elements of their luxurious dainties, to furniſh our Tables, (and with the ewe tree roote our ſelves in the graves, and ruines

* Ier. 22. 12. 13.

ruines of others) when we ſhould come neereſt the invitation of Angels in their abſtinence, not rock our ſelves into a ſleepe, and lethargy of ſin in Beds of Ivery, but tame our rebell luſts by watching, and holy vigilancy. * For thus afflicting our ſelves with rods, we ſhall avoyd Gods correcting us with ſcorpions, and make our loweſt deſcent here the ground of our Exaltation; Like that of Chriſt, who was therefore raiſed becauſe he humbled himſelfe to the greateſt depth of Ignominy, ſcorne, and ſelfe abaſement, even all degrees of Puniſhment, Paine, ſhame, and Death. And the ſervant you know, ſhould not be above his Lord, but (as he was) be made perfect through ſufferings, which made *Solomon* ſay,

* Amos. 6. * Joel. 2. *Iſa.* 11. Jam. 4. * 1 Cor: 11. 32.

*Eccl.7. ſay, *that the houſe of mourning is better then that of mirth; for by the ſadneſſe of the countenance the heart is made better*, whereas unſeaſonable or immoderate pleaſure like a ſurfet, is ever the mother of ſome diſeaſe, ſome grievous puniſhment. And if we once come not only to pleaſe but pride our ſelves in them (nay in our beſt graces; even the correcting our ſelves in thoſe exceſſes) like a gangreene in a joynt, it will corrupt the whole frame, and cannot but ruine us, that caſt the Angels out of Paradiſe it ſelfe. But if we caſt our ſelves downe before God, and like ſtarres the higher they riſe, ſtill leſſen in our owne eyes, he will raiſe us; for like the beſt mines, a Chriſtian the deeper and lower he is in the earth,

earth, (in thoughts of mortality and mortification) the richer; it being the vallies, not ſhelving hils that drink in (and ſo become faire and fruitefull with) the bleſſing from above. Nay it is *the bruiſed reed, and ſmoaking flax*, that God ſtudies to preſerve *, when with *Hugo*, Preſumption robs us of our God, and his protection, envy of our neighbours, and anger of our ſelves, unleſſe it be againſt our ſelves, for then onely it turnes into ſelfe love. * Mat. 12. 20.

Laſtly, and moſt properly God ſends afflictions for the trial of our patience, in that it never appeares but under preſſures (though, if true, it is alwayes waiting upon God in habit and affections) and is the ſoules retiring roome in all diſtreſſes; 15.

distresses; a Mount Sion, *which is not to be removed, but standeth fast for ever* (a). A peice of earth as the Spaniards say, however trod upon, and exposed to iniuries, that is the last thing that triumphs over its enemies: A grace that ever shewes best with the Diamond, upon a darke foyle; a well drawne picture, whose ground-worke is ever laid in the saddest colours, and like the spangled canopy of heaven ever shines brightest when the curtaines are drawne, and the chamber hung with blacks in the most sad and darkest night of temptation. Thus this Grace did shine cleerest in the setting of the Sunne of Righteousnesse, and his greatest eclips upon the crosse, who did then *possesse his soule in patience*,

* Ps. 126. 20 21. Psa. 125.

* Luk. 21. 10.

(b)

(*b*) when torne from his body by his paſſions, for thither it retired againſt the wrath of God, and malice of men, as to the heart ſconce, or fort Royall for ſecurity, which is never to be taken by famine, nor the aſſault of any enemy: In that patience (if pious) is ſo fortified (having the ſtrength of all the other graces, and God himſelfe to be its *hiding place, ſtrength, ſheild*, and *deliverer* (*c*), the rock upon which it is built) as it can never be overcome, nor want a rich harveſt for ſupply of proviſions, when moſt ſtraitened; for it can bring forth humble and penitent (though not repining) teares, which are ever a rich granary to the godly, in that God *will feed them with the bread of teares*, and (though it be

c Pſal. 23. 35. 37. 119. 114.

be but a thinne and penitentiall diet,) will make them as the ſtaffe of food to nouriſh and ſupport them, when all other refreſhments faile (*d*). And at laſt, when almoſt exhaufted, they have a voice and cry loudeſt, * and have ſuch a charming ſound, ſuch a powerfull oratory in them, as God himſelfe cannot reſiſt it, but preſently approaches like a man of warre, and brings releife to ſtreightened and beſieged patience. And if the batteries of the enemy ſhall not onely have deſtroyed and demoliſhed its towers, and turrets of ornament, but throwne downe all its upper roomes of ſtate and conveniency; Patience can lodge more ſafely and as contentedly upon the loweſt floore amongſt the rubbiſh and ruines

d Pſ. 42. 13. 80. 5. Matt. 5. 4. Luk. 6. 21.

* Pſal. 6.

ruines of a decaied greatneſſe; knowing that he cannot want the conveniency of any place, that hath God with him that fils all places, but chiefely makes his ſervants Priſon his Mantion to abide in with them (be it ſpoken in a pious ſence) and needs no rich Tapeſtries for State, but humility; no perfumes, but Prayes; no Ornaments but the Graces, no Crown but the Croſſe, though then he will turne our Croſſes into Crownes, our preſſures, into Praiſes, raviſhing us with Anthems of delight, compoſed of ſighes, and groanes.

From all which conſiderations, if the feet of the Meſſengers of Peace are beautifull, what welcome entertainment ought we to give Afflictions, which are the Hetalds of it, and

are sent but to force us to a Parly and accommodation with our God, and by depressing, studdies our advancement; * Nay let us be glad, and rejoyce in them, when they are upon us; for when oppressed with sinne, they are our Purge, Christs blood our Cordiall; and then though my Phisitian come with a bitter potion, with fire to burne, and cauterize me, he is still but an Enemy to my disease, not me, whether he cure by a long or short Diet.

* Luk 6 23. Jam. 1. 2.

Yet in regard of the sense of our weakness, which will sometimes say to us (perhaps as the Angell did to *Ioseph*) *Arise, take up thy young, and tender babe*, * (thy weak and new borne faith) *and flye*, we may seeke our own preservation; both

* Mat. 2. 13.

both pray, and indevour to avoyd an approching perſecution, or triall; For better a holy flight, then a preſumptuous ſtay, by which we tempt the Tempter. And this we have from Chriſt, both by precept and example; in that he commands us to Pray, *Leade us not into Temptation*, but *when they perſecute you in one City, flie to another*; And did many times withdraw himſelfe in the like caſe from the malice of his Enemies. For though we may not leape over the wall, or by any unjuſt meanes preſerve our ſelves, we may goe out of Priſon (from our troubles) when God open us a doore, and gives us an honeſt and faire opportunity, and not by a rash boldneſſe provoke a danger (againſt all circumcellions

whatsoever) for so *Christ* *Joh.11. 54. *walked no more openly*, * but sought sanctuary, and safe quarter in the wildernesse, when he could not injoye it in the City, like a wise Pilot not splitting his vessell on a Rock, when he can with a faire winde put into a harbour; accounting it rather murther, then Martyrdome to attempt a danger, where it may lawfully be avoyded; which made the God of all power flye from weake man, * and Saint *Paule* escape without sinne, * when *Peter* sinned by his too much confidence * for God Almighty is so wise a Generall, as to keepe a reserve, and not hazard all upon one battle, but made *Lots* retreat from Sodome, and his destroying Angell. So as we must not with the Dolphin hunt

* 1 Pet. 2. 2. * Act. 9. 25. * Mat. 16. 26.

hunt the ſtorme, yet with a well poiſed zeale willingly, not wilfully bear it, when it comes, in a conformity to Chriſt, as a pledge of our filiation for his Glory, our ſanctification, and profit (a); for the beſt things here are but a dimme veſper of a more glorious feſtivall, and the time of injoying them but a poore halfe Holiday to Eternity. And therefore let us, with the Apoſtles take joyfully the loſſe of all for God, (b) who wil then ſtrik a noon daies light into the ſaddeſt night-peece of Afflictions; turne our Gibbets, and places of execution into Triumphall Arches, and make us perſecute our perſecutors more with our patience, then they can us with their torments. But that man, that will be his owne God (de-

a Rom. 8. 29. Phil. 1. 29. 1 Pet. 4. 16. 1 Pet. 3. 15

b Act. 4. 41

livering himselfe by any unlawfull meanes, or flye when Gods glory, or the Churches good commands his stay) is not as one saith, his owne man. Therefore lets us still enjoy
e Heb. 37. ourselves by patience, (e) our brethren by Charity, and our God by faith, making every submissive Act a Confessour (as the babes before they could speake,) and our selves in habit, and resolution Martyrs, every light Affliction but like a rub to an overthrowne bowle, to helpe, not hinder us towards our marke: And then undergoing all for a good cause, it will save us, when we cannot save it (but must see the Arke taken by the Philistines, and the glory departed from Israel) (d) if we suffer
d 1 Sam. 3. without murmuring, where we

we cannot act without sinning, and dye when we cannot doe against our owne conscience, or Gods commands; since God by it doth but take us into safe Garrison from a bloody field (e); yet his Grapes must be thus prested before they yeeld the joy of gladnesse to us; nor then, if we beare it not with Innocence, meeknesse, and contentednesse. For it is not the outward Act, but the inward Affections, and intentions, that makes a good and a happy man, and turnes the stake into his Theater the onely place of his joy, and triumph.

e Act. 21. 13.

Of

Of Innocence.

O Blessed Innocence, the perfection of the triumphant Saints, the beauty of Angels, the life of heaven, Image of God, nay God himselfe, how art thou attainable here below, since thou onely inhabitest above? Yes, God in his humiliation, and becoming the Sonne of man, made it descend with him both for our Imputation, and Imitation, that wee the children of men, might become the sonnes of God. Sonnes both by Adoption, and similitude, and represent him in likenesse, and Image; in perfection of parts, though not dimension, (as a

childe

childe a man in little) for wee must be innocent, as he was innocent, in quality, not equality of purity and holineſſe; for in Chriſt it was like water in the fountaine, cleane, and pure; in us, as in the ſtreame, terrene, and muddy; onely, we muſt draw our lines, and write as neere the Originall as we can, even Chriſts example, and tranſcribe that Primitive and true Copy of Innocence in an active and legible Character, that as he, ſo we may not be onely Innocent in ſufferings (Dovelike without all gall, and bitterneſſe) but ſuffer Innocently, as *falſe, and yet true, as Dying, and behold we live,* * bleſſing our enemies, and praying with Saint *Steven* for our perſecutors, ever overcoming evill with good turnes

* 1 Pet. 2. 2 Cor. 6. 6.

(a) and

* Pro. 26. 32. 19.11. * and accounting it the greatest victory to overcome, and conquer one's selfe. For thus suffering according to the will of God, and committing our selves to him in well doing, as into the hands of a faithfull Creatour, * he will doe well for us, and preserve us by his power unto salvation, * and turne our white robe of Innocency here, (though full of uncleane spots) into an immaculate one of glory.

* 1 Pet. 4. 19.

* 1 Pet. 1. 5

2. Meekenesse is a calme and quiet temper of the soule, and (as walls and bulwarkes to a City) * defends the man against anger, and all such passions (which are but a kinde of short madnesse) that would conquer reason, and so turne the man out of doores, out of himselfe; nay if this grace be wanting,

* Prov. 25. 28.

wanting, it opens a breach for the enemy to enter, and not only carri's us captive from our ſelves, but our God too, who is not to be found in the ſtorm, nor earthquake, but in the ſtill calme, and gentle voice, (as to *Elias*) whereas a meek man is like the bole or great branches of a Tree, not to be ſhaken by the greateſt tempeſts; thus a Heathen, Architas could eſteeme it, when he would never revenge an injury (if angry) but upon himſelfe. So *Socrates*, when *Xantippe* threw water in his face, made no anſwer, but that after a ſtorme raine was ſeaſonable, and that he ſaw the ſame face upon all events. And ſhall they in this be more then men, and we Chriſtians leſſe then ſome beaſts? O no.

Let

Let us by this temper beare all things without disturbance (afflictions from God, Injuries from men) for like milke it will soonest quench wildefire, In that *a soft answer*, as Solomon saith, *endeth strife*: and like Mouseare though it be silken in the handling, can with its juyce cut the hardest Iron, mollifie and soften the most stony heart, and overcome both God and man; when all passions if unbounded, like the evening fogs in some Countries, prove deadly, discolour and taint the vessels they are in, like the worst poisons; which made the Lion of the tribe of Juda suffer like a Lambe (the Lambe of God.) And therefore as the print of that Seale at least, let meekenesse and

softnesse

softnesse of spirit be stampt upon all our actions, that we may not become our owne tormentors. And

1. Towards God, for when he afflicts, silence is our best expostulation, dumbnesse our best oratory. And thus *David* a man after Gods owne heart framed his (*a*); or if we say any thing, let not our disease (as in hot feavers) break out at our lips in any impatience, but with good *Ely* in an humble submission, confesse it is the Lord, *Let him doe what seemeth him good* (*b*), for the *recipe* and medicine must be wholesome however sharpe, if God be the Physitian.

(*a*) Ps. 37. 7.

(*b*) 1 Sam. 3. 18.

2. Towards our Enemies, and persecutors, knowing it is the glory of a man to overcome injuries, and because

the

the wrath of man worketh not
* Jam. 1. not the will of God; * it is
the will of God to punish the
fury and wrath of man, but
contrarily to reward him for
sufferings: many times ma-
king our bittereſt cup, even
death it ſelfe, but a mornings
draught to Eternity, and of-
ten to draw our enemies from
admiration to the love and imi-
tation of us, and makes
the conquerer a captive to the
conquered, teaching them
the way to happineſſe by our
unhappineſſe; rectifies the
Crooked line by the ſtraight,
their cruelty in impoſing by
our meekneſſe in ſuffering; or
elſe makes us take a godly,
though unwilling revenge by
heaping coales of fire on their
heads, and inflaming the very
flames of hell againſt them;

how-

however meekneſſe will be our ornament. * No Jewell being ſo pretious in the eyes of God, nor any thing raiſing us ſo much above the ſphere of man, in that it makes us become a miracle of wonder to others, and is to our ſelves an earneſt of future bleſſedneſſe, to which all preſent felicity is but as a drop to the Ocean, a ſparke to the whole Element of fire; yet, let us from hence learne not to deſtroy, but regulate our paſſions. For as we may be angry, and not ſinne in it; ſo in ſome caſes we may ſinne in not being angry for God; * Anger, and many other paſſions being like ſome ſtarres, good or evill onely in regard of their conjunction.

* 1 Pet. 3. 4. James 1. 20. * Prov. 25. 28.

* Eph. 4 26 * Pſ. 22. 119. 129.

3. Contendedneſſe, is a vertue

the that makes a man Master of his owne happineſſe, the ſtorehouſe of his own wealth, which made *Cyneas* with *Pyrrhus* to enjoy his preſent comforts, without ſtaying for the conqueſt of the Romans, & Affricans; and ſets him above the maſtery of Fortune, knowing it is from within, not without that muſt make him rich; for with Plutarkes mule, the contented man can be pleaſed to want his golden carriage, knowing that all worldly things are but as a waite to ſtow us in our journey to heaven; the greateſt preferments but glorious ſervitudes, and rich fetters, which made *Pyrrhus* ſay, his victories were enough to undoe the Conqueroure; in that what is got by power is commonly kept with care and hazard;

hazard; especially, if like flies that most commonly suck their nutriment from wounds and sores, we live upon the blood and teares of other men. And if a heathen could be master of such a pious moderation, let us make it the center of our desires, as most diffusive of equall Justice to all, and most uniting, and reconciling all extreames from a middle symbolizing with both; and if like a still we thus keep our selves in a moderate temper, we shall willingly want with submission, what we cannot get by lawfull meanes, knowing that all things in this world (even life it selfe) are but the dresse, and shadowes of good, when vertue onely, and a happy death brings the refined part. But admit there were

true happinesse in injoying the best coloured dirt, or any outward splendid greatnes, yet he that desires no more then he hath, hath in that more then any other can injoy in having their desires in all things else. For there, as in a dropsie, drinking doth but increase thirst, and desire being infinite (in respect of the bounded joyes of this world) hath absent not present felicity for its object, and is so farre here from being satisfyed, that the worldly mans happinesse doth but increase his Trouble; like *Alexanders*, whose heart inlarged with his possessions (so as one world could not fill it) but lost his felicity in that he had wonne, by wishing for another that he might conquer, whereas contented

poverty

poverty is a happy Fortune (because it feeth our restlesse desires;) yet then we may invert it with *Seneca*, and say, It is not poverty, if it be content: how much more therefore should wee Christians learne with Saint *Paul*, *in what condition soever we are*, * to content, in a submissive satisfaction, taking no dividing, distracting thoughts, and care for any thing, no not for food, and rayment, * though of all things else they intitle themselves to our Assiduity, and diligence in their obtayning. But let us cast our burden, and care upon God, for he beareth the one, and is ever mindfull of the other. * Nay he hath promised, that if we first *seeke the kingdome of God, and the righteousnesse thereof, all these things*

* Phil. 4.

* Matt. 6.

* Ps. 37. 5. 22. 1 Pet. 5. 7.

a Mat. 6. 33. *shall be added*, (a) as an over-waight to us, added, not given, because of no great worth nor value with a pious man, if we cast our selves upon him in a holy recumbency, and fiduciall confidence for the rest. (b) A most holy thirst or way to want nothing necessary for us, yet here we must onely leave the event to God, not omit any lawfull and moderate indevour on our parts, as subservient to his providence, which ordinarily doth not carry us from one extreame to another but by middle wayes; for though he provides our daily bread, he gives it onely to them, that aske, and labour for it; * but when our actions as well as our tongues, put forth their voyce, they cry aloud in the eares of God, * and never

b Ps. 34. Isa. 26.

* 1 Tim. 5. 8.

* Mal. 3.

never misse of a blessing; for as he that gives us life, cannot want meanes to continue it (in that he can make the rich mans barne the poore mans magazine) so by giving one, he becomes our debter for the rest, *Deus demando debet*, if wee cancell not our title by distrust; Gods present benefits, being ingagements to future mercies, like *Jacob*, and *Esau*, one having a hand upon the others heel, they come into the world as twins.

Nay, it were the greatest Atheisme, and infidelity in the world to thinke (if we be not wanting to our selves) that God either can or will let us want any thing that is good, when to convince us, he doth not onely send us to his promises, but to his unexampled * Rom. 8.

goodnesse; even towards his irrationall creatures; *to the beasts of the field, which saith he, neither spinne, nor takes paines; to the fowles of the ayre, which neither sow nor reape*; and shall not we as he as Saint *Paul* in another place sayes of Oxen, doth God take this care of flowers, birds & beasts, and shall he not much more provide for man, for whose use, service, and delight, those creatures were made? Nay, should we want bread, yet we shall not want life; for man of all creatures lives not by bread onely, but by the blessing of God upon him. For thus God can give forty dayes sustenance in one small refreshment as to *Elias*, and put leanenesse into the soules of those that are daily fed with quailes, and manna;

manus; for his children usually fare best upon a hard diet, (like many birds that grow fattest in sharpest and most biting weather) and with poor *Lazarus* get more health, and strength from *Dives* his crums, (the dogs ordinary) then the other from all his full dishes; and with the Nightingale sings most sweetly, when the thorne is against her breast, (most pricked, and stung by any misery,) like *Paul*, & *Silas* in their chaines, nay, such is Gods goodnesse to us, that if naturall bowels faile, he will still take care of us; as of those birds that expose their young ones as soone as hatched, to a miracle for preservation, * and will fill our mouthes with a sweet dew or something nutritive from heaven, if we open them

* Luk. 12. 24.

that way to call upon him in
* Job. 38. 41. Ps. 147. 9. Prayer * (so the naturalists) whereas the affluence of worldly blessings many times (like the groveling sow to her young ones) kils us with abundance. And this, as one observes, made the Raven (that was unnaturall to her owne) *Elias* his caterer in his distresse, as a return of gratitude to God, for nourishing up her young one without her owne breast: but I rather draw this conclusion from it, that God who made the most unnaturall creature in the world so serviceable, and compassionate towards man in his distresse, neither can, nor ever will want wayes and meanes to releive us, if our eyes be upon him (with good *Iehosophat* when surrounded with destruction) and

with

with him, by making our confidence in his mercies out live death it selfe. For certainly, God can never cast them out of his protection, that thus rely upon his providence, but will allow for necessity, though not for outward bravery, and instead of the artificiall glittering beauties of the world, will cloth them with the Lilies whitenes (Innocency here as an under garment) till they be clothed upon with glory hereafter. And therefore since our heavenly Father knowes better what is needfull for us, then we for our selves, and accordingly dispenses it to us most seasonably, let us submit to every condition, and rather expect a blessing upon our poverty, then desire his outward blessings

*Psa. 78. sings with a curse; * for God loves measure in all things, and gives to every living creature as they have need, and would not have the heart of man more unreasonable then the unreasonable sea (the most unquiet of all the Elements) but keep it selfe within its bounds, and limits; for as just proportion of humors in the body, an equall poise of power in the state (betweene supreme power, and common interest) an even mixture of the elements, preserves the whole universe, so with *Solomon*, neither to desire poverty, nor riches, but to acquiesce in what God pleases to shew his love in to us, is the middle and happy temper of a Christian, & that which makes him most enjoy himselfe in all conditi-

ons,

ons; and moſt perſevering in holineſſe. Therefore let us moderate our ſelves in our deſires toward the things of this life, * ever looking beyond the preſent condition to the future event, and with Saint *Chryſoſtome*, (ſeeing one going to execution with a croud of attendants along the moſt faire and beautifull ſtreets, and another without the countenance or company of a friend, paſſing the moſt narrow, troubleſome and unpleaſant lanes to a happy marriage bed) cry out, *Non quæ, ſed quo, non via, ſed finis*; and thinke our ſelves ſafer in ſhipwrack (God being our Pilote) then the wicked can be in the ſunſhine of their happineſſe, * in that it cannot goe ill with the righteous when the wicked muſt

* Mat. 6. 1 Tim 6. Prov. 30. Heb. 2.

* Pſ. 37. Eccl. 9.

must perish; * nay for our further comfort we shall not live altogether upon expectation, depend upon reversions, and have our wages deferred, for Godlinesse is great gaine, having *the Promises both of this life, and that to come*, even present happinesse in the most unhappy outward condition, in afflictions, wants, necessities, and death it selfe; for though the man that is earthly, as well as earth, lookes upon them in a multiplying glasse of sence, and Perspective of Fancy, and by it apprehends them more greater, and fuller of horrour, then they are in themselves (and so becomes his owne wracke, and tormenter) the good Christian, considering the least benefit he injoyes, a mercy and blessing, every evill he

* Eccles. 8. Job. 20. Eccles. 2. Psal. 34. 1 Pet. 3. 4. 2 Cor. 1. 4. 6.

he wants, a favour and indulgence; when many better then he, wants what he poſſeſſeth, and ſuffers under greater miſeries, that he better merits; finds in this vale of miſery many ſuch wels to refreſh at, and can by Faith (which eaſily workes ſuch miracles) unmaſk the ſatyre, unſting the viper, and turne the ſeeming evils of this world into a reall good; for their vizard being once off, their venome out, there is nothing left to affright us, but many times they worke for our advantage, even in regard of preſent felicity, by want making us become rich, and by a holy chymiſtry turning all thoſe Irons that enter into our ſoules into golden ſceptres (in token of our conqueſt over our affections) emblemd by the

the woman in the wildernesse, who then, and in that sad and solitary condition, tramples upon the moone, all terrene things: for when one depth calleth upon another, our misery upon Gods mercy, * he is so delighted with himselfe in the exercise of that attribute, that he makes it at it were his darling, and the child of his nature, * (as Christ is the sonne of his person) exalting it above all his workes, (nay and ours too, workes of sinne to conquer, and destroy them) and to turne our Egyptian darknesse and servitude into a Goshen, giving us for outward afflictions inward joyes; for earthly losses, true and lasting delights, satisfaction in poverty, when many are poor, when richest, a heart not to desire, which is more

* Isr. 9. Dan. 9. Job. 13. 10 Jer. 9. 28. Isa. 1. 26. 43. Jam. 4. 8. 10. Exod. 34. Psal. 103.
* 2 Cor. 1. 3.

more then we can desire besides: and drawing more releefe from this dry Cisterne, then *Tantalus* when in the River to the mouth, a holy riddle, gaining by losse, and loosing by gaine, an improving of our joy a hundred fold with persecutions by losing our goods; * in regard of inward peace, and complacency; the issue; and crown that followes it, if we can but learne with Saint *Paul* equally to want, and abound, in what condition soever to be content, * and by it make afflictions become a reall lye, & our selvs a holy paradox when in having nothing we injoy all things. * For if God be Christs, and Christ be ours, as the Apostle argueth, we have in him, as spring, and fountaine all other joyes, and comforts, that

* Matth. 10. Marke 10. Job. 31.

* Ph. 4. Prov. 1. 14. 13. 7.

* 2 Cor. 6.

that are but derivative from him; and in their severall streames communicated to us, and need looke no farther then to him for supply of all things fit for our condition. And therefore it is good to trust, and waite with *David* for his salvation, who can make our prison a Palace, our death a life, our hell here a heaven in regard of inward comforts; if in the dampe of affliction, (when our candle burnes dimme by our being too much undergrown in our affections) we make haste to be drawn up, and set our conversations for heaven, and heavenly objects.

But admit that with afflictions God gives not that blessing in this life, so as in all the travell of our soules and sharpest throws we cannot be delivered of

of his promised seed, and numerous issue of happy fruits, (the effects, and productions of Gods grace, and goodnesse to us), but when the Children are come to the birth, we want strength to bring forth, so that with *Phineas* his wife, * we miscarry in our Pangs, and loose our lives, before our weake, though true, faith, and feeble midwife patience can deliver us of those expected joyes: yet then (and never till then) we begin to live: the Act of our conscientious death, for Christ, and a good cause, being our crowne of life (deferred onely because we fought it not as we should, not lost) our inthroneing, and inauguration in immortality, if we persevere in a patient, pious, and humble comport-

* 1 Sam. 4.

* Rev. 2.

ment in our ſufferings; for it is not our reſiſting (though to ſome drops of blood, if we make a diſhonourable retreat, but keeping the field dead, if not alive, that inables, and intitles us to the Gardland, and Trophies of victory, through Jeſus Chriſt our Lord, who will ſwallow up the victory of the grave, and make it become the grave of its own victory, by giving up all its ſlain, and becoming a ſlave to its captives; for he that makes the greene Tree become dry, (he that thinkes himſelfe full of ſappe, and life to faide and dye) will make the dead, and withered one to ſpring againe, and flouriſh; * nay, with *Gideons*, * till theſe earthen Pitchers of our bodies are daſhed in peeces, the lampe of our ſoules

* Iſa. 17. 24.

* Jug. 7.

soules will never shine cleere, but then God reassuming them from the ashes of their cold urnes, will make them as sockets, in which their soules shall in endlesse glory burne; And therefore, though God have his furnace, it is but to melt and refine us, to new cast, and stampe us with his own Image, and make us, currant money for heaven, which is the true end of (as it puts an end to) all the Afflictions of the godly, *and for sowing in teares here, makes us reape joy, *if we are not harder and more rebellious against Gods rod, then the flinty Rock was to *Moses (where fire rather then water was to be expected). Yet let us be Flints too in our inwards, ever keeping a virtuall fire, and zeale to Gods glory, to purge

* 2 Cor. 1. 4, 6.
*1 Pet. 3. 4
* Eccl. 7.
* Mat. 5.
Ps. 126. 6.

us from all drosse, and sinne: for without it none shall enter into Paradice, nor be made heires of immortall glory. So as you see our natures had need every way to be wrought upon; we are such a masterpeece of perversnesse, such mettle as will not take impression from soft meanes, but must have the rough hammer and Axe of Afflictions to hew, and fashion us, though like the sunne beames they worke according to their object, melting wax, and hardening Clay, winning upon the Godly, but obdurating the wicked, as the hammer the Anvill; and this makes God sometimes angry, that he might not be angry with us, lightning before he thunders, warning before he wounds, * afflicting here to take

* 1 Cor. 6. Rev. 22.

* Ps. 7.

take away ſinne, * that by continuing in ſinne we might not be everlaſtingly afflicted. And becauſe proſperity makes us unproſperous (in that we are naturally prone to turne Gods bleſſings into curſes, * and never cry, *Lord ſave us, we periſh*, but with the Diſciples in a ſtorme, *) God raiſes Tempeſts amongſt us that (with *Ionas*, and the Marriners) may force us to call upon our God; for then are we onely ſaved, when we thinke our ſelves neereſt drowning, and may ſay with the Philoſopher, *Periiſſem, niſi periiſſem*, ſo as wee ought to be contented in all eſtates. Thus the dead wombe of *Sarah* will conceive, and bring forth an *Iſaac* of comfort, our winter dying blaſted condition will ſpring,

* Iſ. 27. 1. Jer. 4. 1.

* Pſ. 69. 106. Mal. 1. 2, 9 Pro. 1. 31 * Mat. 8. 24. 27. Luke 8.

* Mat. 10

and revive in death, and make it better in the wise mans opinion, then birth, * in that it changes our habitation, earth for heaven, and extinguisheth our rent here (feares, and teares) giving garments of gladnesse for those of heavinesse, for finite sorrowes, joyes beyond Arithmetick to number; and in our passage over this red Sea will be both our way, and support; never laying any burden upon us but lending his own shoulder to it, with the temptation ever giving the issue, * and like a good Gardiner never cuts his Rose bush, but to render its flowers more sweet, and florishing; like a good Physitian never lets us blood, but to cure our Tympany of Pride, dropsie of covetousnesse, or the like; and never

Job. 5.
Eccl. 7
Job. 14. 19.
Is. 61.
Cor. 7. 6.
1 Cor. 10 13.
Heb. 12.

never tempts but only for triall, not seduction, nor withdrawes himselfe, but to make us the better value his presence, and favours (contraries being the best comments upon one another) yet let us ever pray against this last as most dangerous, but still rely upon him; never letting goe our Anchor, which will in the end, above, beyond, nay without meanes save us; * for if the Potter will not let his vessell continue in the fire to destroy, but lute and fix it, the carrier not overload his beast, God much more remembring how weake we are built, and our foundations to be but dust, will weigh out his pressures to our abilities, shortning our paines, or inlarging our patience, making all things to worke

* Isa. 43. Psa. 91. Ph. 2. 4.

* Psa. 10

Rom. 8. worke for our good; the lines how contrary ſoever drawne to center in our happineſſe; and though in miſery we thinke our time ſtands ſtill, like *Ioſhuahs* ſunne; it then hath wings, upon which we ſoare towards heaven. Nay, God will not onely worke thus for
Ph. 2.13. us, but in us, by us, and upon
Iſa. 26. 12. us what he commands from us,
Heb. 8.10. filing us to make and forme us
Eph. 1. veſſels for his temple, hewing
Gal. 2.20. and ſquaring us, as timber for his Sanctuary, hammering our ſtony hearts for his ſpirituall building, ſmoothing and poliſhing us for beauty and Ornament, and to ſhew his own reſemblance, and Image in us, when he in any of theſe wayes reflects upon us. But to conclude, God takes that care of us in all things as nothing can hurt

hurt us, no temptation on the right nor left hand shall ever finally prevaile against us, but God will turne our deepest sorrowes into our highest joyes, so as if in the fire of publike miseries, (our homebred dissentions which like *Samsons* Foxes devour all before them) the inward warmth of compassion, burnings of repentance, heat of zeale to Gods house or glory, doe as from a limbeck distill some heavenly drops from our eyes, turn our laughter into mourning, and make us raine upwards, that very trouble will improve to happinesse, and those drops turne into the water of life to us, and being kept in Gods bottle * will fall downe againe upon us in refreshing dewes to allay our greatest inward

* Psal. 56.

stormes;

stormes; nay they are in Gods booke to wash out our sinnes, that should be there registred against us (yet onely as a meanes of obtaining mercy, not from any intrinsick worth) and out of our consciences the blackest Characters of acted transgressions. Nay, these eye Jewels, or pearles in the eyes, falling from them will so cleer the sight, as we shall discern the glittering vanities of this life to be but meer shadowes, shining meteors, nothing but *vanity and vexation of spirit*, * and not fall in love with that face that will not stay to be saluted, but rather see beauty in the blackemore, love the wrinkles, and blemishes that the truest picture of misery (man under the Torrid Zone of Gods Fatherly displeasure) can pre-

* Eccl. 1.2.

sent,

sent; * for so we may espouse an abiding happinesse, and have eternity for joynture setled upon us. * Isay. 53. * Act. 14. 22.

And therefore let us with patience runne the race (how rugged, and difficult soever we finde the way) *looking to Iesus, the Author and finisher of our faith*, that *with him*, and for him, *we may endure the Crosse, despise the shame* for *the joy set before* us. * For *suffering with him, we shall assuredly* be *glorified together*; * he shining like the sune, and fountaine of light, we like lesser stars borrowing our lustre from him, (being for ever fixt in the same Orbe) without either wane or Eclips, injoying perpetuall day without night, joy without sorrow, satisfaction without satiety, a happy eter- * Heb. 12. * Rom. 8. 17, 18.

nity,

nity; an eternall felicity; heaven being the only Olympus above the meteors; and stormes *of this world* which for its inconstancy is in the *Revelation* Emblemd by a Sea; and that of glasse, for its frailty, and brittleneſſe; in its forme circular, and moving; to ſhew the inconſtancy of all things in it; its matter fading, vaniſhing, and dying; to teach us the periſhableneſſe, and certaine mortality of all its beauties: for as the Father is, ſuch are the Children, all but empty glories; nay man himſelfe, the Maſter peece of nature, and comprehenſion of all other beings, and perfections, cloſe bound up in a little volume (if we looke into his materials, the weakneſſe and ſhort continuance of the building) we can account

account but as a vapour, a shadow, a bubble, that soone banisheth; a walking peece of earth, a well glazed pitcher, soone broken; a heap of ruine, rather then a faire structure, and in his greatest perfections a cipher or nothing. In that honour is but a blaze, or meteor, many times made up of the baseſt matter; a treasure without lock or key, more in the power of another, then the owner; riches but Gold; Gold, but a well coloured peece of dirt, which against nature, rather then stay to make us happy, will (though a dull, and heavy element) take wings, and flye away; fame a hollow Eccho, beauty a well glazed pitcher, or fading flower, friendship a dying happinesse, joy but folly, mirth a short mad-

madneſſe; all things in their longeſt continuance, but a ſound or flaſh of lightning, that dyes as ſoone as borne; a dim glaſſe, darke reſemblance, or apparition of future happineſſe: for in the making of this goodly frame, (this out-building or ſuburbs of heaven) as in a little note-booke, God onely writ in ſhort and illegible Characters (drew in modell or little) thoſe everlaſting, inutterable raviſhing glories, that ſhall be revealed when the ſcene is to be opened, the curtaine drawne, the vaile of our ſoules (our bodies) done away, even ſuch as our crippled fancy, out imped and pinnioned imaginations cannot ſoare to, and therefore with a ſilent admiration, a blindneſſe occaſioned by ſeeing the luſtre of

of many suns at once, let us expect to enter that immence infinite blessednesse (by faith) that cannot now enter into us (into our finite capacities) and begin our heaven in our holinesse, the true way, approach, and gate to happinesse: and from inward principles be constant in our outward sufferings for the name or cause of Jesus, and so turne our enemies pitty at our pressures into wonder at our patience, and our patience into an everlasting fruition of blessednesse, and seale (if Gods honour require it, and our Countries good) to that truth by our deaths, we have made profession of in lives; *suffering all evill of punishment, rather then commit any the least evill of sinne; for such a temper of the soule (when in

Act. 20.

* Rev. 2. 12.

in the lowest center of misery) will like fire to fewell turne all into it selfe, into satisfaction, if not complacency, and with the wood in *Exodus* will convert these bitter waters into sweet and refreshing springs. But if our weake faith doth not worke such miracles, let not our soules be vexed, nor disquieted within us, but trust in God, (as well for the resurrection of our joyes here, as of our bodies hereafter) who is the helpe of our countenance, and our God, * and having received presse mony (past favours, which are alwayes pledges of future mercies) let us waite upon God, fight unto death, and not quit our colours for want of pay here, but expect our triumphs hereafter; when the enemy; sinne,

* Exo. 15. 25.

* Psa. 42. 43.

ſinne, and death are totally vanquiſhed; and in the meane time, (like Cloth in the fullers hand which muſt be thorowly whited, and dreſſed to make up thoſe robes of ſtate, (the innocency of the Saints) we muſt be for ever adorned with hereafter) let us yeeld our ſelves to be trampled on, and rinſed in ſeverall waters (many troubles) ſtill fearing that if the deluge of Affliction once begin to fall, or abate, a worſe ſlime of ſinne will cover the face of our earthly hearts, and we for ever may ſtick faſt in that mire, without water to cleanſe us, if the fountaines opened to *Inda*, and *Ieruſalem* for uncleaneſſe be ſtopt againſt us, and then if the Baits of ſinne, delights of the world carry us along in

thoſe ſoft and boggy wayes, and ſinke us deeper; how ever their entertainments are ſweetned for the preſent with hony, we ſhall ever finde the Bees ſting in their taile; their concluſion will be bitterneſſe; and if our tenderneſſe ſhrinkes at the prickling of Afflictions here, how ſhall we endure the wrack hereafter? if not the ſparkes of divine diſpleaſure, how the flames of hell fire for ever, and ever?

Now to prevent this miſery, which is as immortal, as the body, the body as the ſoule, the ſoule as God himſelfe; let us take lawfull pleaſures here, (when God allowes them) but not ſuffer them to take us, yet ſometimes pleaſe our ſelves in the want of pleaſure it ſelfe; for what we ſow in weakeneſſe,

* 1 Cor. 7. 29. 31.

neſſe, ſhall riſe in power *nay to Glory -- nay in Glory; for as all Joyes here flow into the joyes of Heaven (as rivers into the Sea) ſo the faithfull Chriſtian ſhall not looſe his in death. But his ſoule aſſoon as out of his body, ſhall only goe from one Heaven to an other; for the way to Heaven is Heaven, ſo that as the Angels did not deveſt Heaven in coming to us, good ſoules do inveſt Heaven in going to them, the true joy that a *Zacheus*, (a ſoule in union with God and Chriſt) apprehends here, being that none can take from him. For as one ſaith wittily, crowd Heaven into a Map, its two Hemiſpheres are made up of joy and glory, joy uſhering in glory, ſo that in the anguiſh of death, agony of

* 1 Cor. 15.

Joh 14.16

dissolution, vision of horror, nay sight of hell it selfe, I shall see the face of God, and all these will be, but as Glasses that collect, and reflect his ravishing rayes upon me, adding joy to joy, and glory to both, and exchange for *a great bubble* (blowne out with an easie breath; for that childe, and darling of time, *antiquity in blood*, for *an empty, airy title*, which is innobled onely by action, and retaines nothing but the wax fit for any label, (if wanting the stamp of true piety and worth,) for the hollow sound of fame,) a crowne that can never be lost for goodnesse, and vertue will reflect a brave lustre upon the memory of a dead, as well as upon the person of a living Saint; a gallant eccho of praise, when

dead

dead, for his praising of God, when living: and though, as one saith, envy may sometimes mist the glasse of Reputation, so that it shall not report a cleere light, yet at the last judgement it will reverberate truly, and we shall shine in a sphere all brightnesse, and be known by a transparent light on every side, what we were here, what we are in heaven, to the glory of God, joy of the Saints, shame and derision of of our enemies. So great is the convictive Majesty of goodnesse in the beames of the setting sunne, and though the highest perfection of the soule, the most sublimed part of man here is full of imperfections, blemishes, and dying beauties, which doe rather hide, then shew the glory of a sanctified spirit,

ſpirit, or the true Image of God drawn in little there; yet this way of taking God into us is our onely way of being taken into God, and to make him our ſheild, and exceeding great
Gen. 5. reward, our defence here, and Crowne hereafter, when our Candles ſhall be put out in our earthen ſockets, our lofty blowne bladders empty themſelves of breath, and we ſleepe in death, a darke Gallery, or ſhady walke onely leading betweene two lives the period and Omega of the earthly mans happineſſe, the Alpha, and beginning of the Chriſtians bleſſedneſſe, the higheſt ſtep to honour, and birth day to eternity, where we ſhall for ever injoy day without night, ſatisfaction without ſatiety, a tranquill happineſſe in a hap-

py

py tranquillity, eternall bleſſedneſſe in a bleſſed eternity. So be it, *Amen.*

GEntle Reader; *though naturally men love the iſſue of their braines more then of their bodies (in that they are many times longer lived; more true and laſting records of the innobled ſoules they derive their pedigree from; then the other) yet the authour of this little worke choſe rather to be forgotten, then remembred by a peece; that (if examined by a cleer and open light) will repreſent him with ſo many errours and ill drawn features to the world, and deſigned it onely for himſelfe and his; but truly a civility to the law of friendſhip (where deſires are commands) and the conſideration of its uſefulneſſe in regard of the unhappy Harmony betweene its ſubject and theſe times made me firſt lend (and now ſend*

send it) abroad, and give it line beyond its authours intention, though not liberty to goe but whether my hand directs: for I have onely Printed a few Coppies to satisfie some private importunities; and therefore if thou be one of that number, its failings are now mine and thine, and so intitle themselves to your forgivenesse, which is the humble request of thine in all affection.

FINIS.